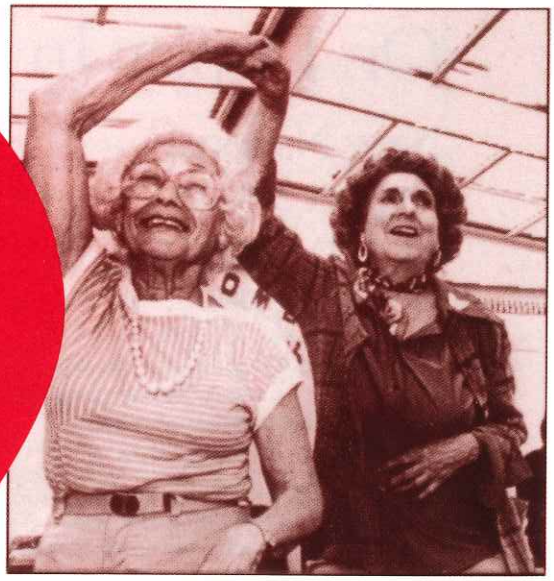
CommercePeople

OCTOBER 1993



You make it happen

1993 Combined Federal Campaign

Pages 8-9

COMMERCE: The Trade And Technology Story

TRADE PROMOTION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Toward a National Export Strategy

U.S. EXPORTS = U.S. JOBS

Page 2

The National Medal of Technology

Page 2

Commerce Initiatives On Trade, Technology On Display In Twin White House Ceremonies

New National Export Strategy As Job Creator

For most in Commerce, the real start of the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee (TPCC) was last March when Secretary Brown convened a Cabinet-level meeting of principals from 19 government agencies, all involved in trade promotion.

The goal: to develop a National Export Strategy that works, one that is streamlined, focused and coherent and one that advocates for the U.S. business community.

The next seven months between March and October compressed thousands of hours of steady, intense, detailed work performed by hundreds of agency strategists, many from Commerce and its family of bureaus.

The Congressionally-mandated project had a Sept. 30 deadline. And, on Sept. 29, 1993, came the President's announcement of an historic break with the past in export promotion.
The resulting new National Export Strategy is one the Adminstration will use to create jobs and inject new life into the U.S. economy as we approach the 21st century.

Perhaps the TPCC logo, "U.S. Exports Equal U.S. Jobs," sums up expectations and intentions.

At Commerce, the TPCC was a perfect match with Administration priorities, Department responsibilities and Secretary Brown's leadership.

Because Commerce has led the 19-agency effort and Secretary Brown is the TPCC chair, he has been and will remain the focal point of the project.

Even those not working directly on the project here at Commerce became acquainted with the subject over the

cont'd on p. 3

Secretary Brown Receives Input From CEOs At An Early TPCC Meeting

The Winners

The 1993 Medal of Technology winners are:

- **Dr. Walter L. Robb, General Electric R&D Center in Schenectady, NY.** For his leadership in the development and commercialization of new medical-imaging technologies and related manufacturing initiatives, both of which have improved health and contributed to U.S. global leadership in a high-technology industry.
- **Dr. Hans Liepmann, California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, CA.** For his outstanding research contributions to the field of fluid mechanics and for his devotion of more than 40 years to the education of the world's leaders in aeronautical engineering.
- **Amos E. Joel Jr., AT&T Bell Laboratories in Murray Hill, NJ.** For his vision, inventiveness and perseverance in introducing technological advances in telecommunications, particularly switching, that have had a major impact on the evolution of the telecommunications industry in the U.S. and worldwide.
- **Dr. William H. Joyce, Union Carbide In Danbury, CT.** For his entrepreneurial talents, along with his technology business leadership, in recreating and commercializing a plastics production process.
- **Dr. George Levitt, Du Pont Co. in Wilmington, DE. and Dr. Marinus Los, American Cyanamid in Princeton, NJ.** For their independent contributions to the discovery and commercialization of environmentally friendly herbicides to help ensure an abundant food supply for a

cont'd on p. 3

National Medal Of Technology Awarded To Nine

If quality technology is the vehicle driving American commerce to new heights, then it follows that the U.S. Dept. of Commerce is supplying some of the high octane fuel.

Secretary Brown provided the latest example of Commerce's support for industry-growing technology on Sept. 27 when he announced winners of the 1993 National Medal of Technology. The awards were presented during a Sept. 30 White House ceremony.

The Medal of Technology program is a Commerce initiative that underscores the Department's commitment to supporting technological developments that advance U.S. commerce.

The National Medal of Technology is the highest award for technical achievement bestowed by the President. It is given for extraordinary accomplishments in the commercialization of technology or the development of human resources that foster commercialization. The President gives final approval for all awards and the nine 1993 winners, originally chosen by President Bush, represent a cross section of industry and

cont'd on p. 3

National Export Strategy

cont'd from p. 2

months — and with the massive effort to produce a streamlined, more focused way for Federal government to advance exporting.

The new national export strategy hit the headlines across the country even before Sept. 29 when President Clinton and Secretary Brown announced the plan to an assembled group of CEOs at the White House. The plan was delivered to Congress by the Secretary Sept. 29 and 30 in testimony before House and Senate committees.

The 19-agency TPCC recommendations presented to Congress "seek to assist U.S. business, and especially small-to-medium-size firms, compete more effectively abroad, supporting an increase in U.S. export-related jobs," said Secretary Brown.

"A more effective export strategy can easily result in over one trillion dollars in exports and six million additional jobs by the year 2000," he added.

The report, "Toward A National Export Strategy," contains 65 specific recommendations for revamping U.S. export promotion initiatives, including major changes in export finance, overseas networks and domestic field offices of U.S. agencies.

TPCC's major proposals include significant liberalization of the export controls on U.S. high-technology exports.

"American businesses argue that controls have not kept pace with either changes in technology or changing political realities and are the single most important impediment to exports..." the report states.

With "an aim to balance economic growth with equally important U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, the Administration is proposing sweeping export control reforms," said Secretary Brown.

"These changes will allow us to boost U.S. exports by billions of dollars, creating thousands of new American jobs without costing the taxpayer a penny."

Other National Export Strategy proposals address the needs of the small to medium size exporter, who, Secretary Brown confirmed, "consider getting help from the bureaucracy as great a hurdle as foreign market barriers." TPCC's "one-stop shops" proposal will consolidate government resources and co-locate Commerce, Small Business Administration and Export-Import Bank representatives to support a more coordinated, simplified approach to export assistance. "One-stop shops will provide the U.S. exporting community a single point of contact for all Federal export promotion and finance programs," Secretary Brown said, "For the first time, government is bringing together under a single coordinated management team, the resources of a wide variety of U.S. agencies. This is a revolutionary way of assisting our client — the U.S. exporter. No longer will firms be forced to roam from agency to agency in a search for help and answers."

"Toward a National Export Strategy" is the first TPCC annual report. It is the product of an intensive, cooperative, and inclusive 6-month review of U.S. government export promotion policies and current programs, to discuss and debate creative approaches and relationships, and to formulate a new national export direction.

More than 2000 representatives from small, medium and large businesses, trade associations, academia, private sector export services, labor unions, and State and local governments provided recommendations. TPCC member agencies include the Department's of State, Treasury, Defense, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Transportation, Energy, Offices of Management and Budget, U.S. Trade Representative, Council of Economic Advisors, Environment Protection Agency, Small Business Administration, Agency for International Development, Export-Import Bank of the United States, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, U.S. Trade and Development Agency and U.S. Information Agency (with the National Security Council and the National Economic Council participating in deliberations).

WINNERS

cont'd from p.2

growing world population.

- **Kenneth H. Olsen, Digital Equipment Corp. in Maynard, MA.** For his contributions to the development and use of computer technology; and for his entrepreneurial contribution to American business.
- **Dr. George Kosmetsky, University of Texas in Austin, TX.** For his commercialization of various technologies through the establishment and development of more than 100 technology based companies that employ tens of thousands of people and export over $1 billion worldwide.
- **William D. Manly, Martin Marietta in Oak Ridge, TN.** For his outstanding success in the development and processing of advanced high-temperature and high-performance materials, and the transfer of this technology to a variety of American industries.

Medal

cont'd from p. 2

organizations.

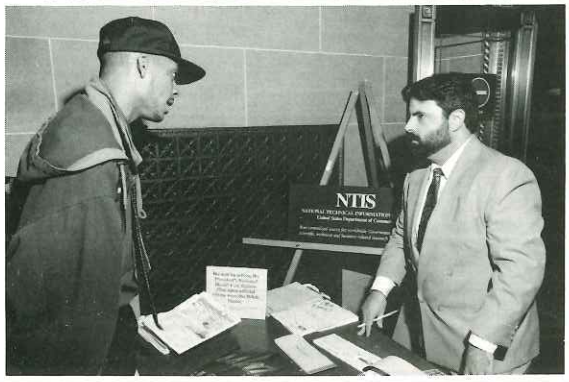
The award program is administered by the Department of Commerce's Technology Administration (TA), headed by Dr. Mary Lowe Good, Under Secretary for Technology.

In making this year's announcement, Secretary Brown said, "On behalf of the Administration, I would like to congratulate all of this year's National Technology winners. The medal is given to demonstrate an unwavering commitment to progress through technological innovation."

"There is no doubt in my mind that the contributions of these leaders will help propel our country into the 21st century's global marketplace as the foremost technological innovator."

"As the Department of Commerce and President Clinton select our 1994 Technology Medal winners, we will be looking for the best representatives of our progress in technology creation in this post-Cold War era. Along with the Baldrige Quality Award, also bestowed by the Department of Commerce, the National Medal of Technology is an indicator of America's commitment to a competitive global future. Quality and technology go hand-in-hand and are the twin engines driving U.S. progress and our success."

HISPANIC HERITAGE: Commerce observed National Hispanic Heritage Month with a variety of events and exhibits Sept. 15-Oct. 15. One highlight was a program honoring Hispanic Americans. Speaker was Edward Jame Olmos, television, stage and screen actor known for work in "Kojak," "Hawaii 5-0," "Miami Vice" and "Stand And Deliver." (Top row, l. to r.) (1) Pictured with Olmos viewing Hispanic art in the Commerce lobby are (left to right) Gil Cardenas, Galeria Sin Fronteras Inc.; Olmos; DoC Chief of Staff Robert Stein; Gil Colon, Acting Director, MBDA, Commerce; Jonathan Sallet, Office of the Secretary, Policy and Strategic Planning, and Patricia Navarro of Cibola Communications and (2) Olmos poses for pictures with Gloria Gutierrez, Office of the Secretary/Director of Administration. (Bottom row l. to r.) (3) Olmos poses with Irma Salley, Office of Civil Rights. (4) Olmos addresses Commerce employees in the auditorium and (5) poses with Maria Cardona, Office of the Secretary/OPA.



*READY AND WAITING: Under Secretary for Technology Mary Good and Director of the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) Donald Johnson were ready to greet the public the morning the White House released the Administration's Health Care Reform Plan. In the second photo, Leon Spiro, a NTIS employee, takes orders for the report offered through NTIS on its online electronic network, **Fedworld**. Paper copies of the report are also available through NTIS sales desk (703) 487-4650 for $15. NTIS is a Commerce Department agency which serves as a clearinghouse for government information. It does not receive appropriations from Congress but relies instead on revenues generated by the sale of documents. NTIS had the health care reform plan available electronically within hours of its release by the White House on September 23.*

U.S. Exporters Top Congressional League

The U.S. Exporters, a team that originated in the Department of Commerce 10 years ago, is the 1993 Congressional Softball League champion.

About 200 teams participate in the Congressional League, making it the largest in the D.C. area, according to a spokesperson. The season concluded with a two-week tournament in late August.

The U.S. Exporters, a co-ed team, is comprised of current and former DoC employees, including Matt Andersen, Jay Hatfield, Jeff Laxague, Neal Stine, Kathy Hill, Terri Bowman, Mark Jenkins and Rebecca Lane.

Hundreds Say Goodbye To Commerce's Stanley

By Cathy Reynolds

Commerce's Janie Stanley made lots of friends in her more than 30 years of Federal service.

That was clearly evident when Mrs. Stanley retired this summer and an estimated 300 to 400 Commerce employees gathered at a retirement reception to pay tribute.

Even through the reception was held in an extra large Commerce conference room, not all the well-wishers could get in. Many friends and colleagues waited four deep in the hallway before getting inside the room to say their goodbyes.

It was an "exquisite, lavish and blessed retirement reception you gave me upon my departure," said Mrs. Stanley (see her goodbye letter).

Beginning her government career in 1957 as a GS-3 secretary typist in the Office of Personnel, Dept. of Labor, Mrs. Stanley worked her way up to director of the security division in Commerce's Bureau of Export Administration (BXA).

Climbing the career ladder, she also worked as a secretary, medical secretary and office assistant both at the Department of Labor and the Maritime Administration, which at one time was a unit operating under Commerce.

It was at Commerce's Maritime Administrtion that Mrs. Stanley became a security expert, and in 1971 made the transition from secretarial ranks to professional status.

She remained in the security "business," working for Commerce's ITA's (International Trade Administration) predecessor, the Domestic and International Business Administration and later for ITA where she was responsible for the information, physical and industrial security program, including NATO's.

Finally, spanning 20 years in which she was COSMIC (top secret) control officer for both the Maritime Administration and the Department of Commerce, she received a commendable rating from the Central U.S. Registry.

Mrs. Stanley plans to spend her retirement with her husband, a retired United Airlines employee, seeing the world, taking care of her grandchildren, and most importantly, working in church outreach with her husband. A dedicated church-goer, she has served as a Sunday School teacher for 46 years.

To My Commerce Friends,

Reflecting on our walk through Commerce together as work partners and friends, I thank my God for each day we had. We did make a difference serving people, meeting their needs and bringing a smile and nod of satisfaction to their faces. Our creative, innovative ideas, molded into the implementation of viable programs with unlimited growth potential, made a better world for many generations to come. We must never lose sight of our individual efforts and worth to make a difference wherever and whenever we can in our daily walk through life.

I shall forever be grateful to each of you for the exquisite, lavish, and blessed retirement reception you gave me upon my departure. I felt the warmth of your love, joy, goodness and gentleness during the entire celebration. You blessed me with words of encouragement, praise, adoration, spiritual growth and enlightment which will be my stronghold of faith as I now begin my ministry here in Crofton.

Your very presence enveloped the harmonious and picturesque setting for my retirement festivities. So much love, time, effort and perseverance went into making it one of the most memorable experiences of my life. The gifts and personal testimonies brought sheer joy and excitement, expressing your sentiments and thoughts in such beautiful ways. The scroll is a treasured keepsake as its pages unveil the very essence of tidings and great joy.

Returning to Commerce from time to time, I look forward to seeing you and sharing a time of fellowship which has brought us to where we are today, "forever friends."

Janie Stanley

Janie Stanley

Clarification: Those Are U.S. Air Force Facilities

Dr. T.M. Georges, head of NOAA's Over-The-Horizon (OTH) radar research project, reports that the OTH radar facilities pictured on the cover and on page nine of last month's *Commerce-People*, should not have been represented as NOAA facilities. "These radars belong to the U.S. Air Force, which has kindly permitted NOAA to use them for its ocean-monitoring experiments," he said.

Commerce's Approach to Reinventing Government: Renewing To Meet the Nation's Many Challenges

National news outlets have covered Vice President Gore's National Performance Review in great detail, but the Department of Commerce has carried out its own, less publicized "reinventing government" project.

Along with his work with the National Performance Review, Secretary Brown was determined that Commerce take an equally hard look at itself.

"American companies have spent the past decade modernizing their management. As representatives of the private sector in government, we must use this opportunity to make equally dramatic improvements here in the Department of Commerce," he said.

With that challenge, the Secretary last May asked for the help of all employees. Persuaded that Commerce employees were an untapped reservoir of creativity, he launched a major effort to seek their ideas. He sent a memo to all employees asking for ideas, asked that we publish an article here in CommercePeople, sent a message by electronic mail, and formed a team of volunteers to conduct idea discussion groups and work with individuals to develop their ideas.

A deluge of ideas resulted — nearly 8,000 suggestions for improving virtually all aspects of operations.
For example, Bruce Reynolds, a supervisory patent examiner with 26 years government service, sent in an idea to establish independent examining libraries for the 16 different examining groups to give the examiners quick and ready access to patent laws.

Currently, examiners sometimes have to go into other examiners' offices to access necessary materials, or they must go to central libraries. Both processes waste time and money. When asked about the CPR effort, Reynolds said, "This has been a great opportunity to make a difference. A lot of people here feel the same way."

Renee Miller and Pam Swiatek from the Office of Procurement and Administrative Services, Washington, D.C., agreed.

"We've been impressed with the Secretary and his staff's active interest in making changes. They have shown their personal commitment by implementing changes immediately whenever possible. Commitment from the Secretary and this staff has driven this initiative, unlike other suggestion programs.

Kim Terrell, PTO, adds this sentiment, "The CPR is a step forward — asking for ideas from all employees shows that the Secretary really cares what we think. The whole reinvention effort is a positive step for all government."

Every idea was reviewed and evaluated by the head of the bureau, assisted usually by a team of employees and then submitted for Departmental review first by the CPR Steering Committee and then by the CPR Executive Committee.

Implementation began immediately. A number of procedures were streamlined or eliminated: the requirement for approval of travel by multiple persons to the same destination was delegated to bureau heads, and the "counterpart clearance" process for personnel clearance was eliminated.

Bureaus have implemented hundreds of ideas already and the Department has also selected priority ideas that will be fully researched and prepared as action documents.

While some may ultimately not be implemented because of cost or other factors, all offer considerable potential for improving service delivery.

Topics being pursued include expanding the availability and improving the quality of economic data on the Newly Independent States and Eastern Europe; developing options for an annual forum on Federal-wide technology transfer as a means of enhancing commercialization by the private sector, and automating standard government-wide and Commerce forms to reduce printing and labor costs.

But the Secretary wanted to be sure he heard from the widest possible range of people and organizations in his Commerce Performance Review. Along with his highly successful employee idea program, he also used several other outreach techniques. He directed, for example, that 30 "focus group" sessions be held around the Nation to gather ideas from managers. Each session was led by a trained facilitator and dealt with a specific issue, such as improving the U.S. trade position or automating Commerce operations.

Customers ideas were also of particular importance to him, so he directed that a series of quick customer surveys be conducted and that a more comprehensive program be developed for customer input.

On a third front, the Secretary formed five interdisciplinary teams to explore reinvention in broad program areas — technology, information, economic stimulus, trade, and the environment. The teams were to ignore boundaries of organization and turf and their proposals, soon to be released, were to challenge traditional management approaches.

To supplement the internal idea generation process, the Department will also seek the views of its customers. A preliminary customer survey was used by five bureaus to provide information to support management improvements.

The survey examined customer satisfaction with products and services of the Department and customer assessment of the importance of those products and services to them. In addition, it asked that our performance be compared with other organizations and that the respondent provide suggestions for improvement.

The Department is now working with the Bureau of the Census to develop a comprehensive customer survey methodology that will incorporate a combination of written surveys and interviews. This initiative will be part of the continuing effort to reinvent Commerce.

cont'd on p. 7

Secretary Brown Greets Employees At Commerce Performance Review Reception

Reinventing

cont'd from p.6

Shortly after the idea generation effort began, five cross- cutting programmatic teams were formed.

Each was lead by a bureau head and included members from throughout the Department. The teams examined broad functional areas, deliberately not confining themselves to the traditional boundaries of organization, and developed a wide range of recommendations for the Secretary's approval. Their reports include 50 proposals for action.

Although too numerous to list here, the following are a few examples under review now:

- establishing a one-stop source for computer access to government data on business, economics, international trade and demographics in the Department.
- launching an initiative to have the Department serve as focal point for U.S. firms to promote trade in oil and hazardous chemical spill response products, building on the Department's own experience in this arena.
- designing a prototype Technology Data Bank, using CD-ROM technology, to bring together for U.S. manufacturers, research reports, abstracts and other data on use of new technology.

A fourth way of getting new ideas was through a series of focus group sessions which brought together managers from different parts of the Department in small, facilitated groups to generate and discuss ideas for improvement.

The meetings were organized around specific themes, including five programmatic and seven administrative management topics.

More than 300 employees, located both in Washington and in the field, participated. Focus group meetings were held, including 21 in the Washington, D.C. area and 9 in five different field locations.

Specific proposals include the following examples: improving Government's ability to work productively with U.S. standards-setting bodies to represent U.S. interests in the international arena; drawing together the community-based field offices of EDA, MBDA, and SBA to work cooperatively on assistance programs; and requiring value-added and cost-benefit analyses of all new or revised administrative processes, procedures and rules.

These ideas illustrate the nearly 100 specific proposals that emerged from the focus group sessions, all of which are now under review for implementation.

A fifth avenue for "reinventing" the Department were the reinvention laboratories.

These labs will enable Commerce to experiment with a variety of approaches to improving program performance, and to do so at different types of installations.

Five reinvention laboratories have been approved so far:

- **Information Dissemination to U.S. Business** — The National Technical Information Service will experiment with means to provide one-stop, electronic service for business. Key components will be "FedWorld," a pilot gateway to Federal agency electronic bulletin boards, the comprehensive existing NTIS document collection, and electronic on-line dissemination techniques.
- **Computer-Assisted Survey Information Collection** — The Bureau of the Census will establish an environment of innovation and risk-taking to re-engineer the full process associated with computer-assisted technologies. This approach reflects the move from traditional paper and pencil data collection to fully automated approaches.
- **Flexible Workplace Experiment** — The Patent and Trademark Office plans to experiment with a plan to allow employees to perform a substantial portion of their duties at another work site, typically their home. The experiment will build upon recent PTO advances in automated technology.
- **Reinventing Export Administration** — The Bureau of Export Administration plans to creatively deal with its budget driven downsizing by creating a more flexible, performance-driven organization, reduced in size without recourse to reductions in force.
- **Inter-bureau Experiment with Scientific Labs** — The Department's Boulder, Colorado facility houses scientific laboratories from three bureaus.

An important lesson learned was that an effort to get ideas for improvement must have the clear support of top management to assure employees of the sincerity of the effort. Secretary Brown's commitment to this process was evident to all, from top program managers to part-time summer clerks.

The Department took an ambitious approach to the reinvention effort and its Commerce Performance Review tapped the ideas of managers, employees, and customers.

The full impact of the effort is not likely to be known for some time as changes are implemented and their benefits verified. But work will continue with the vast array of ammunition — nearly 8,000 ideas from employees, 100 recommendations from focus groups, and 50 detailed proposals from cross-cutting teams, all supplemented by the customer survey data and ideas. Potential savings could be significant, but these must be carefully researched.

But equally important, improvements in customer service and product quality are expected. That is the ultimate test of this effort and Secretary Brown says he is determined we will not just meet, but exceed expectations in this area.

Commerce Launches Its '93 CFC Drive; Secr

The more than 19,000 Washington area Department of Commerce employees are being asked this fall to dig deep into their pockets — and hearts — and help make the 1993 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) the most successful ever.

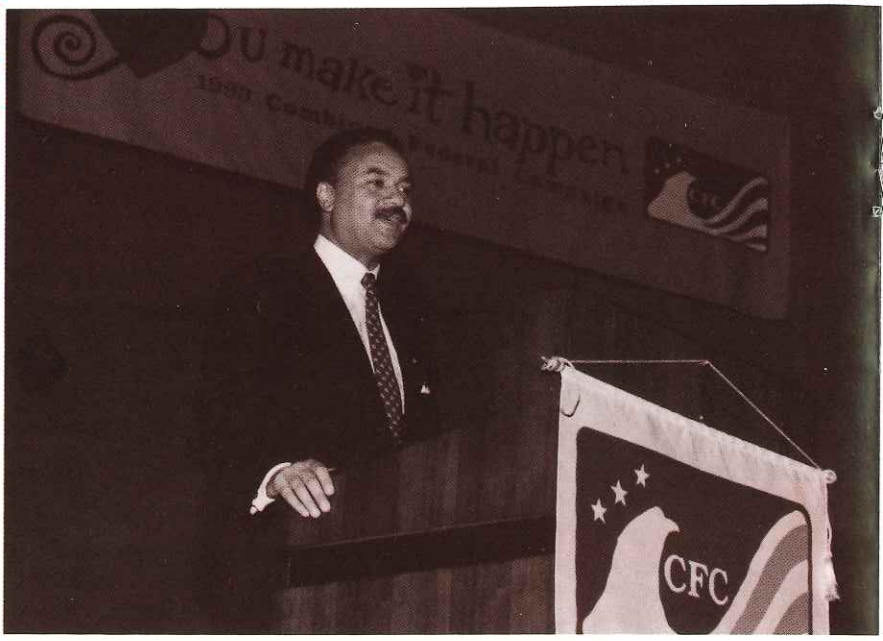
Begun more than 30 years ago, the CFC is the Federal government's major annual push to raise money for a wide range of local, national and international non-profit agencies that provide a variety of services for those in need. This year's government- wide goal is a record $38 million. The theme is "You Make It Happen."

Although Commerce is but one of 158 Federal departments and agencies participating in the National Capital Area drive, this year's fund-raising effort has special meaning for the Commerce family.

That's because President Clinton has asked Secretary Brown to chair the D.C.-wide campaign, which annually is the largest CFC in the country. Secretary Brown will also head the Department of Commerce drive.

In turn, the Secretary has asked NOAA Under Secretary James Baker to serve as vice chairman of the Commerce drive. Dr. Baker tapped Julian (Skip) Wright, the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology, to coordinate the CFC in Commerce. He is chairman of the Executive Committee established for the

Photos by Ronald Bell, Office of Public Affairs



Secretary Of Commerce Brown Addresses CFC Washington Area Kickoff

In A Show Of Solidarity, CFC Crowd— Including Secretary Brown (Center) — Joined Hands In Song.

TV Personality And CFC Kickoff Emcee Lark McCarthy Introduces Secretary Brown

The D.C. Choral Kaleidoscope Performed At Kickoff Rally

etary Brown Heads D.C.-Wide Push

Commerce effort. Jonathan M. Silver, assistant deputy secretary, is serving as Executive Committee vice chair.

Secretary Brown kicked off the D.C. area campaign Sept. 24, addressing some 1,500 Federal campaign workers from various departments and agencies. They are among several hundred campaigners who'll be soliciting the 400,000 Federal workers in the greater Washington Federal community.

"Over the years," he told the group at Andrew Mellon Auditorium, "the generosity of individual Federal employees has changed thousands of lives for the better. Our contributions have a tangible and lasting effect on our communities."

He encouraged the campaign workers "to carry a message of empathy and optimism back to our colleagues. I firmly believe that once they understand the effect their gifts will have, they will give...and give generously...from their hearts."

CFC needs are greater than ever, the Secretary said. Three hundred new nonprofit agencies were added to the list this year, increasing the total number of participating agencies to more than 2,100.

Not only are there more agencies, services being provided are in greater demand this year, he said. The increased agency needs arise from this year's devastating floods and hurricanes, as well from the growing ongoing problems of inner-cities, the homeless, the abused and the physically and mentally challenged, he added.

CFC Campaigners Talk To Secretary Brown After Campaign Kickoff Rally

A Huge Crowd Packed Mellon Auditorium for 1993 CFC Kickoff

In kicking off the Commerce campaign this month, Secretary Brown encouraged campaign workers and employees to help the volunteer agencies meet greater demands by demonstrating a level of generosity never before witnessed in this Department. He challenged Commerce to take the lead in the National Capital Area drive by far exceeding the less than $2 million raised here in 1992. More than 60 percent of Department's employees contributed. The average gift was more than $165.

Goals for 16 Commerce agencies and bureaus are being set. Some bureaus are staging their own kickoffs for campaign workers and employees.

As in the past, Commerce's campaign ranks have been organized, and campaign workers will be approaching employees over the next several weeks, asking for generous CFC gifts. Those gifts can be in the form of cash, check or payroll deduction. But, employees will be encouraged to opt for payroll deduction since many consider it a "painless" way of giving that provides a steadier flow of funds to agencies.

Givers will be provided a "Catalog of Caring," which describes the more than 2,100 participating assistance agencies. They range from children's homes and women's health research organizations to homeless shelters and alcohol and drug abuse counselers. Only about 4 percent of the money donated is set aside for printing materials, training campaigners and auditing contributions.

Commerce contributors can designate individual agencies as recipients — and donors can either identify themselves to the agencies (for acknowledgements) or give anonymously. Givers also can divide contributions equally among local chartities only or among national or international charities. Contribution amounts can also be kept confidential if a donor asks for a special sealable gift envelope.

Commerce workers can earn "Eagle Awards" by pledging one percent or more of their salaries to CFC. There are also awards for offices that attain certain levels of giving.

Commerce And The Combined Federal Campaign: Answers To Some Typical Employee Questions

How Did CFC Start?

The Combined Federal Campaign's tradition of commitment to the community through the selfless efforts of Federal employees has its roots in the many charitable campaigns of the early 1960s.

Seeing a need to bring the diversity of fund-raising efforts under one umbrella, Federal employees created the CFC — one campaign, once a year.

By allowing employees to select from a single guide, and make their contributions through payroll deductions, the CFC opened wide the door to more opportunities for generous giving to literally hundreds of worthy causes.

An Executive Order made the CFC a reality, and turned an innovative idea into a uniquely effective way for Federal employees to help those in need across our community and throughout the world.

What Does A Commerce Employee's Gift Accomplish?

This year, more than 2,100 local, national and international voluntary agencies will benefit from your thoughtfulness and generosity.

A few minutes of your time today can mean meals for hungry children, relief for families in need of counseling, further work on cures for diseases, comfort for the dying, access to water in the Third World, environmental protection, and better lives and renewed hope for millions of people in our global community.

Can I Control Where My Gift Goes?

The choice is yours. Through your designation, you ensure that your donation goes to meet those needs you feel are most important. Except for the administrative costs of conducting the campaign, all funds are distributed as designated.

Only charities that have been approved by either the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or the Local Federal Coordinating Committee are allowed to participate in our community's CFC. Please do not designate any organization not listed in our Catalog of Caring, which will be made available to all Commerce offices.

Write-ins are prohibited and cannot be accepted. The Federal government encourages you to designate your gift to the specified federation or charity of your choice. You may indicate your choice by designating up to five organizations in the boxes provided .

For contributors who prefer not to designate a specific agency of federation, there are four general designation options. These options are described in detail in the Introductory Pages section of the Catalog of Caring (please see page 25). Undesignated gifts will be added to "All Agency—Designation Option AAAA" and distributed accordingly.

What's The Advantage Of Payroll Deduction?

Payroll deduction is your key to substantial giving by letting you spread your contribution across the entire year.

Last year, more than 87 percent of all CFC funds raised were given through payroll deduction. Payment on payroll deduction pledges begin on the first pay period in January. Because there is no simpler way for you to make good things happen for so many people, payroll deduction ensures your continuing role in the care and stewardship of your community and your world.

Who's In Charge Of CFC?

While the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has been charged with the oversight of the CFC, the actual decisions regarding the conduct of your local CFC are made by your colleagues in Federal service within the provisions and policies established by OPM.

The Local Federal Coordinating Committee (LFCC) is composed of Federal employees and representatives of labor unions with Federal employees as members.

Who Manages CFC?

Every year, the LFCC selects one of the voluntary organizations involved in the CFC to manage the campaign and serve as fiscal agent. OPM sets strict requirements for this role. In our area, the United Way of the National Capital Area serves as the Principal Combined Fund Organization (PCFO). The CFC fiscal records are subject to compliance audits conducted by OPM as well as annual audits done by independent certified public accountants.

Do Fund-Raising Costs Eat Up Contributions?

Through the outstanding oversight efforts of the Federal employees on the LFCC, approximately 4 percent of the funds raised is spent on printing materials, training volunteers, and auditing contributions.

Because this cost is so low compared with other fundraising campaigns, every dollar you pledge goes a very long way toward helping others.

Is CFC Giving Voluntary?

Remember, any contribution you make should be freely given. You have the right not to be improperly influenced in making your decision regarding the making or withholding of contributions in the CFC. Coercion is forbidden.

In order to guarantee this voluntary spirit, the Office of Personnel Management has identified several practices that are not permitted, including but not limited to: supervisory solicitation of employees supervised; setting of 100 percent participation goals; providing and using contributor lists for purposes

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CFC

cont'd from p. 10

other than the routine collection and forwarding of contributions and installment pledges; establishing personal dollar goals and quotas; developing and using lists of non-contributors.

Civilian employees who wish to register complaints about coercion should consult with their personnel offices; military personnel should contact their commanding officers.

How Does Federal Government Decide On Catalog Charities?

Charities got involved either at the national or local level. Charities with programs in 15 states and several foreign countries applied directly to the Office of Personnel Management.

Only those agencies certified by OPM are listed in the brochure in the "National/International Agencies" and "International Agencies" sections.

Local charities that help residents in the metropolitan area or adjacent counties in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia requested participation to the Local Federal Coordinating Committee (LFCC), the "board of directors" of our campaign in Washington. Federal employees broadly representative of the Federal work force here in the National capital area volunteered to serve on the Technical Advisory Committee, a standing committee of the LFCC, and to make recommendations to the LFCC after a thorough analysis of each application.

The local charities listed under the heading "Local Agencies" have met OPM requirements for local eligibility.

Contributions less the LFCC-approved administrative fee are remitted monthly by the Principal Combined Fund Organization.

Commerce Averaged $165 Per Employee In 1992's Campaign

Although it ranked sixth in number of employees, the Department of Commerce contributed the fourth largest amount to the D.C. area's 1992 Combined Federal Campaign.

Last year, 11,443 of Commerce's 17,817 workers gave $1,898,099 to CFC. That's 64.2 percent of the DoC workforce and an average of $106.53 per employee and an average of $165.87 per gift.

Number one 1992 contributor — of more than 150 federal departments and agencies — was the unit with the most employees. That's the combined **Navy/U.S. Marine Corps** forces in D.C. More than 28,000 of the Navy/USMC's nearly 43,000 employees (65.6 percent) donated $3.2 million, averaging $75.28 per employee and $114.68 per gift.

Others in the "top ten" were:

2. Army, 37,693 employees, 24,287 givers (64.7 percent), $2.5 million ($101 average gift).

3. Health & Human Services, 24,328 employees, 15,646 givers (64.3 percent), $2.3 million ($146.36 average gift).

4. **Commerce** (See above).

5. U.S. Postal Service, 22,277 employees, 10,594 givers (47.6 percent), $1.8 million ($170.58 average gift).

6. Justice Dept., 19,941 employees, 12,657 givers (63.5 percent), $1.6 million ($126.05 average gift).

7. Agriculture Dept., 11,920 employees, 8,711 givers (73.1 percent), $1.4 million ($163.82 average gift).

8. Transportation Dept., 10,326 employees, 8,526 givers (82.6 percent), $1.3 million ($153.85 average gift).

9. Air Force, 13,457 employees, 10,357 givers (77 percent), $1.2 million ($116.47 average gift).

10. State Dept., 12,958 employees, 5,213 givers (40.2 percent), $1.2 million ($227.86 average gift).

Smallest contributing unit was Office of Nuclear Waste. Both employees there contributed equally for a $96 total.

Several departments and agencies contributed in excess of 100 percent employee participation. The leader was the Council On Environmental Quality. Although it had only 22 employees in 1992, workers gave 31 gifts (140 percent).

The unit with the top average gift was the National Indian Gaming Commission. Eleven gifts (122 pecent) averaged nearly $550 each.

Give 1 Percent, Soar Like Eagle

What does a Commerce "eagle" look like? It's a Department employee who has very broad shoulders — shoulders large enough for supporting individuals who cannot lift themselves out of difficult circumstances.

You'll find these Commerce "eagles" generously opening their hearts and pocketbooks during the 1993 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), which is underway at DoC and throughout the Federal government.

Again this year, those Federal workers who contribute 1 percent of their salaries will qualify for the Eagle Award, an attractive pin that symbolizes generosity and caring.

Donors can indicate they're meeting the Eagle Award level by signing in the appropriate space on the right hand side of the pledge card.

CFC officials say becoming an "eagle" category giver is more affordable than many might think.

For example, for a Commerce employee with a $20,000 annual salary, the biweekly payroll deduction would be only $7.69. For someone at the $30,000 level, the paycheck deduction would be $11.54. At the $40,000 annual income level, the deduction is $15.38.

Other CFC awards can be earned by individual offices:

- President's Award — for contributing at least $150 for every person employed.
- Chairman's Award — for $100 per person employed and 75 percent or more participation.
- Honor Award — for $75 per person employed and 70 percent or more participation.

The Information Highway
How It Will Affect You In Commerce

Government employees, small businesses, trade associations, large corporations, medical researchers, students, librarians all have a stake in the construction of an information highway, formally known as the National Information Infrastructure or NII.

If adopted, the NII could make possible an information revolution that will change forever the way people live, work, and interact with each other.

How will this help the average government employee? Imagine this scenario:

You could live almost anywhere you wanted without worrying about a long commute and rush hour traffic. You would simply "telecommute" through an electronic highway. This highway would consist of a seamless web of communications networks, computers, databases, and consumer electronics that would put vast amounts of information at your fingertips.

You could obtain government information or publications directly through the network and conceivably apply for government benefits electronically. It would make it easier for you to do your job — you could locate information or services quickly within the Commerce Department, or through individual government agencies, the White House, and Capitol Hill.

You would be able to assist businesses and exchange information electronically, getting in touch with other government officials easily.

Medical specialists, educators and manufacturers could be linked to the nation's best research facilities. Researchers could be eligible for Federal grants to use the nation's fastest supercomputers to solve problems in those fields. Digital libraries would be available to help students browse through thousands of libraries using video graphics.

You could see the latest movies, play your favorite video games, or bank and shop from the comfort of your home whenever you chose. Waiting in line for services such as these would be a thing of the past. All this would be available on your computer on-line, when you needed it.

The media has been concentrating on the Administration's NII initiative. What exactly is it? The NII includes more than just the physical facilities used to transmit, store, process and display voice, data and images. It also includes an ever-expanding range of equipment, including cameras, scanners, keyboards, telephones, fax machines, computers, switches, compact disks, video and audio tape, cable, wire, satellites, optical fiber transmission lines, microwave nets, televisions, monitors, printers and much more.

Whether you work for the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, NTIS, ITA or NOAA, you recognize that information is one of the nation's most critical economic resources, for service industries as well as manufacturing, for economic as well as national security. By one estimate, two- thirds of U.S. workers are in information-related jobs, and the rest are in industries that rely heavily on information. Manufacturers work with suppliers via advanced computer networks.

And we at the Department of Commerce are taking the lead with this initiative.

Secretary Brown has been appointed by President Clinton to chair the Information Infrastructure Task Force. He has been charged with appointing the members of the private sector advisory Council on the National Information Infrastructure.

Through the task force and with the private sector, Commerce will begin the dialogue that will lead to the creation of the NII.

As Secretary Brown explained, the private sector will build the NII; in recent years, U.S. companies have invested more than $50 billion per year in the infrastructure of telecommunications. And that number doesn't include the vast investments being made by firms in other information industries, like computers and computer software.

Census Continues Championship String

Two Census softball teams captured titles in this year's Department of Commerce tournament.

In the Co-Ed Division, three Census teams and a team from the Inspector General's office wound up in the semifinals. Two teams from Census with the best records then exited bracket play to tangle in the championship game.

It was Swiss Cheese maintaining its perfect record (4-0), defeating WC Fielders for the title.

In the Men's Division, SESCO (Census), F.A.H.Q. (Census), NIST and Stoney's Cafe (BEA) advanced from bracket play into the championship round.

In the semi-final clashes, Stoney's nipped SESCO, 10-9, and F.A.H.Q. downed NIST, setting up a title showdown.

Then, with the championship on the line and Stoney's and F.A.H.Q. exchanging leads several times, Andy Krynak (tournament Most Valuable Player) slapped a bases-loaded triple in the last inning. That proved to be the difference in a 13-12 F.A.H.Q. victory.

TQM Corner

NIST Plant Division Is Developing 'PEP'

Customer satisfaction. That's the goal of a new quality effort at NIST's Plant Division.

Plant Division employees who provide facility design, engineering, planning, construction, operation and maintenance support recently kicked off their total quality management program—known as the Plant Excellence Program (PEP). The division was one of six selected by the NIST Director to participate in a pilot TQM project.

"As in the past, the customer will be the main focus of our effort," said Plant Division Chief Robert Moore. "While we think the division is already a quality organization, we know that it's always possible to improve our processes and outputs," added Moore.

The division actually began its TQM planning last year by setting up a Quality Council. The council has written division vision and mission statements, developed a charter, named preliminary teams, and provided quality awareness and team building training for division personnel.

In addition, the council developed quality process steps for teams to use in improving processes and it developed a division assessment.

At the kick-off meeting, Moore was joined by NIST Director of Administration Guy Chamberlin, who told employees the quality program would be key to Plant Division's success in coming years.

"As our facilities get older, the job gets tougher and more demanding," he said. "I look forward to working with you to make this a successful program."

Also speaking at the meeting was Vickie Fultonberger, business representative of District Lodge No. 12, International Association of Machinists, AFL-CIO. Fultonberger spoke of the need for both management and the workforce to work together to get the job done—and done right.

The division has identified several goals for the future, including better communications within the group, quarterly meetings of all division staff to share quality effort information, and a long-range Quality Strategic Plan. In addition, a customer excellence course is nearing completion.

Commerce MED Week Theme: Economic Strength Through Diversity

Commerce's Minority Business Administration and the Small Business Administration co-hosted the 1993 National Minority Enterprise Development Week (MED Week) Conference this month.

Both Secretary Of Commerce Ronald H. Brown Brown and Erskine Bowles, Small Business Administration administrator, endorsed the conference, which included more than 1,000 minority entrepreneurs and government and corporate officials.

Since 1983, MED Week has been celebrated annually under Presidential proclamation. Now a national tradition, MED Week affords the country an opportunity to recognize outstanding accomplishments of minority-owned businesses and their critical role in supporting the nation's economy.

The conference was the culmination of more than 125 local and regional MED Week observances held throughout the country to recognize and promote the accomplishments of minority business enterprises and their supporters.

The 1993 MED week theme was "Minority Business: Building Economic Strength Through Diversity."

The Commerce Department has identified more than 1.2 million minority-owned busineses in the United States providing over 836,000 jobs and reporting over $78 million in annual sales and receipts.

Commerce Secretary Brown said: "With opportunities expanding all around, our challenge will be to make certain this time around everybody benefits...Our goal is for minority businesses to become cornerstones of an urban renaissance and beome large employers of city residents."

Highlights of the Conference included a White House Ceremony honoring two National Minority Entrepreneurs of the Year chosen by MBDA, and the National Minority Small Business Person of the year.

Some 6,200 minority high school students attended a one-day symposium on entrepreneurship; and more than 800 minority business owners attended a Congressional reception hosted by Congresspersons Kweisi Mfume, Charles Rangel and Eleanor Holmes Norton and Senators Daniel Inouye and Carol Moseley-Brown. Several other members of Congress were invited to attend, including Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and Congressman Jose Serrano.

Other activities that took place during the 4-day conference included a minority vendors' trade fair and seminars on management, marketing and financing presented by business development experts from government and industry.

Some of the award winners honored at the White House ceremony included Lance Herndon, president of the largest Black-owned information systems and consulting firm in the southeastern United States, who along with Ramona Castillo, was named 1993 National Minority Entrepreneur of the Year. Ramona Castillo is chief executive of the largest Hispanic woman-owned advertising speciality distributorship in the country.

Presented also during a formal banquet were awards to Power Meus I, who was awarded 1993 National Minority Business Advocate of the Year. Meus serves as president and owner of a Miami-based transportation service firm and is well known for his organization of a local trade association to support minority cabbies.

Other awards were presented to the National Minority Construction Firm of the Year; the National Minority Manufacturing Firm of the Year; the National Minority Retail Firm of the Year; the National Minority Service Firm of the Year; the National Minority Supplier/ Distributor of the Year and the Director's Appreciation Award.

Consumer Corner: Focus On Fraud

"Focus on Fraud" is the theme of this month's CONSUMER CORNER and of National Consumers Week, October 24-30, 1993. Remember: IF IT SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, IT PROBABLY IS!

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Q. I should have known better, but I called a 900 number recently and wound up with an outrageous charge on my phone bill. Isn't there anyone trying to stop these rip-offs?

A. Yes, there is. The Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) new 900 Number Rule takes effect in November. It sets cost and other disclosure requirements as well as procedures for resolving billing disputes. Pay-per-call telephone services will have to state the cost of the call in advertising and introduce all calls over $2 with the cost of the call. Consumers who dial, hear the introduction, and hang up right afterwards, won't be charged.

If you haven't done so already, write to your phone company to dispute your charge and send copies of your complaint to the FTC, Correspondence Branch, Washington, DC 20580 and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Common Carrier Bureau, Informal Complaints Branch, 2025 M Street, N.W., Room 6202, Washington, DC 20554. In the future, know what you're getting and how much it will cost before making the call.

Q. What is a "dirt-pile" scam?

A. One of many types of telephone investment fraud, this scam is one in which a telemarketer offers the opportunity to invest in unprocessed ore, making false claims about its precious metal content. There are many variations on the same theme: paying a substantial amount of money now for the promise of a high return in a couple of years. Actually, the mine is worth little, if anything—about as much as a pile of dirt.

Other fraudulent telephone investment schemes include offers for gemstones, rare coins, oil and gas leases, and strategic metals (used in high-tech or defense-related industries). Beware of offers that guarantee high and quick profits, require immediate payment, or claim that there is no risk. Ask yourself whether you really want to give so much money to someone you don't know over the phone. Check out all investment offers with appropriate authorities before you invest, such as the State Securities Commission, State Attorney General's Office, Federal Trade Commission, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the National Association of Securities Dealers, and the National Futures Association.

Q. Because I had some problems paying my bills, I have problems getting credit. I saw an ad from a company saying that my credit could be fixed, so I sent them $75 to do it. They didn't do anything and now I'm out my $75. What can I do?

A. Never believe these claims. No one can erase correct negative information from your credit file nor can anyone do more to correct errors in your credit record than you can do for yourself. Correct negative information generally remains in your file for 7 years, bankruptcies for 10 years. You will just have to try to pay bills on time from now on and wait until the credit reporting agencies clear your file.

You should review a copy of your credit report to make sure the information is correct. If you have been denied credit within the last 30 days based on the report, you have the right to review your report at no charge. If there are mistakes, notify the credit reporting agency in writing. They must delete any information they can't verify. If the matter isn't resolved and you still dispute the information, you can have your version of the situation included in your file. The addresses of three of the largest credit reporting agencies are listed in the Consumer's Resource Handbook, available from the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Regarding your problem with the credit "repair" company, contact your state Attorney General's office to see if they can help. Send them the details of your complaint, along with copies of the ad and proof of payment (such as the front and back of your cancelled check). There may be state laws that apply. Send a copy to the FTC, Correspondence Branch, Washington, DC 20580.

cont'd on p. 16

GOOD NEWS FOR CONSUMERS:

To combat car salvage fraud, the Department of Transportation has appointed an advisory committee to study the problem and recommend solutions. Car salvage fraud involves taking crashed vehicles and/or salvaged parts from crashed cars and rebuilding them to sell as undamaged. The advisory committee, established under the Anti-Car Theft Act of 1992, expects to make recommendations by next summer. The Act also provides for a National Motor Vehicle Title Information System by 1996 to allow States and consumers to check the accuracy of information on used car titles and determine whether used cars have been rebuilt.

Commerce People

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News items may be mailed, or phoned in to the editor on FTS (202) 219-3605.

Jill Schuker .....OPA Director
Steve Teasley .....OPA Editor

It's Never Too Early To Begin Your Planning

If only I had..... If only I knew then what I know now.....

Many people make such comments as they are about to retire from Federal service. They hoped they had done things differently. For example, they wish they had paid their post-56 military deposit earlier, had contributed more to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), or had asked if some service they forgot they had performed in the past can be credited toward their retirement now. Often it is too late for them to take advantage of missed opportunities or to avoid delays in the processing of their retirement application.

Retirement? "Why should I be thinking about retirement?" "I'm not ready to retire," you say. Well, it's never too early to begin PLANNING for your retirement.

Here are a few things you can do NOW to help make your transition from Federal service to annuitant go smoother and to ensure that your retirement benefit is all that it can be when you actually retire:

1. **Review your Official Personnel Folder (OPF).** This is a good thing to do periodically for a number of reasons. Check to see that all of your Federal civilian and military service is documented by Standard Forms 50, Notice of Personnel Action, or by military discharge papers such as DD 214s, respectively. Alert your personnel office about any Federal civilian or military service you have performed that is not recorded in your OPF. Ask them to assist you in obtaining verification of this service and determination of its creditability for retirement purposes.

2. **Be certain that your retirement system coverage, health benefits enrollment, life insurance status, or Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) election is reflected accurately in your OPF and on your earnings and leave statements.** If it's not, then immediately notify your personnel office or payroll office.

3. **If you have a post-56 military service for which you owe a deposit to either the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), make sure you obtain your military pay information for that service as soon as you can.** Even if you plan to delay making your post-56 military service deposit payment(s), your payroll office will need this pay information to compute your deposit amount (including applicable interest) in time for you to pay it in full prior to your retirement. Have this information available, preferably on file in your OPF, to avoid a delay in the processing of your post-56 military service deposit when you are retiring. Better yet, if you owe a post-56 military service deposit, think about paying it now before you are charged further interest.

4. **If you're a FERS employee, make sure you are participating in TSP at the earliest time you can begin making contributions from your salary.** FERS employees are eligible to contribute up to 10 percent of basic pay to TSP. You should start contributing at whatever percentage or dollar amount you can afford to put aside for yourself. Actually, you can't afford to NOT contribute to your TSP account. The sooner you're participating in TSP, the greater your retirement benefit with be in the future. If you are a CSRS and CSRS Offset employee, it's a good idea for you, too, to contribute to TSP. Many retirement planners have estimated that the average retiree will need an annuity equal to 70 percent of the high-three average salary earned during his or her Federal career to maintain the lifestyle he or she had at the time of retirement. Under CSRS, your annuity benefit with 30 years of Federal service will be computed using around 56 percent of your high-three average salary. Even if you plan to work after you retire from Federal service, you can make up some of the difference between the benefit you receive and what you actually will need through TSP.

PERSONNEL Q&A

Q. If I am on leave without pay due to an on-the-job injury, am I eligible to receive worker's compensation benefits and unemployment compensation benefits at the same time?

A. Most states either disqualify an individual from receiving unemployment compensation (UC) benefits while they are receiving worker's compensation benefits, or reduce the UC weekly benefit amount by the amount received from the worker's compensation benefits. In addition, if the injury has resulted in you being unable to work, you would be ineligible to receive UC benefits because you must be *available* to work to receive UC benefits. The employment security office in your state of residence should be contacted for more specific information concerning eligibility for UC benefits.

Q: I am a probationary employee. How long is the probationary period and why is it required?

A: The length of a probationary period is 1 year, except for some NIST employees whose probationary period is up to 3 years. The probationary period is that last and most important step in the examination process. It is intended to give the employer an opportunity to assess, on the job, the employee's overall fitness and qualifications for continued employment and to permit the removal, without formal procedures, of an employee whose performance or conduct

cont'd on p. 16

PERSONNEL Q&A

cont'd from p. 15

does not meet acceptable standards. For more information on this and related employment issues, contact your servicing personnel office.

Q: If an employee has filed for bankruptcy, can the employee's Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) account be attached by order of the bankruptcy court?

A: No. The employee's TSP account cannot be garnished or attached, except for purposes of child support or alimony payments directed by court order.

Q. Five months before the end of the appraisal period I was promoted from a non-supervisory (GS-12) to a supervisory position GS-13). My supervisor tells me that the 7 months' work I did as a non-supervisor during this appraisal cycle is not figured into my final rating. I don't understand why more than half the year's work is not accounted for in my appraisal?

A. Since you moved from a non-supervisory to a supervisory position, you also changed appraisal systems under which you are covered: non-supervisory employees are covered by the General Workforce Performance Appraisal System (GWPAS), while GS 13-15 supervisors are covered by the Performance Management and Recognition System (PMRS). Governmentwide and Department regulations prohibit work performed in a position covered by the GWPAS system from being counted towards an appraisal under the PMRS system. Each system varies in its requirements. In the PMRS, ratings are tied more closely (by statute) to both base pay increases and performance awards than under GWPAS. Also, the total amount of PMRS performance award money available in an office is, in part, based on the total aggregate salaries of PMRS employees in that office. Because of these differences, only ratings based on work in a PMRS position are used for PMRS employees, which is why your final rating will be based only the 5 months' work that you performed in your supervisory (PMRS) position.

Commerce Will Observe National Consumers Week

The Office Of Consumer Affairs (CAO) will coordinate National Consumers Week (NCW) activities at the Department of Commerce.

Those activities will "Focus On Fraud," the theme of the 12th annual NCW, which is Oct. 24-30. Estimated to cost American consumers more than $40 billion per year, common marketplace frauds include health quackery, investment swindles, telemarketing and mail order scams, auto sales and repair fraud, credit card and credit repair scams and home improvement fraud. (See Consumer Corner in this month's edition, page 14).

Businesses, particularly small businesses, can also be victims of con artists. Typical frauds targeted at businesses include false billing schemes (such as phony yellow pages invoices), office supply scams, ad specialty and prize officers and advance-fee loans.

For a resource list of publications for businesses on how to avoid being victimized, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs by phone, 202-482-5001 or by fax at 202 482-6007.

Each year, the Department of Commerce, along with other Federal, State and local government agencies, businesses, trade associations and others, participate in NCW to highlight the role of consumers in the economy.

National Consumers Week is sponsored by the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs.

CONSUMER Q&A

cont'd from p. 14

Q. My mother has suffered with arthritis for years and tried different pills doctors have given her. Nothing has really worked, so I've been wondering about some of the "natural" treatments I've seen advertised. Should she try them?

A. According to the FDA (Food and Drug Administration), arthritis sufferers are one of the current target groups for health fraud. Fraudulent ads may promise a cure for the disease (there is no known cure) with snake venom or steroids, or at arthritis clinics. These may not only be a disappointing waste of time and money, but a danger to health as well.

In addition to arthritis, other current health fraud promotions target the areas of fitness, weight loss, and cancer. Be skeptical of ads for health products or services which promise quick cures, "secret formulas," scientific "breakthroughs," testimonials, or one product "cure-alls." If you have advertising materials which are questionable, contact your local FDA office listed in the government section of your phone book..

CONSUMER GROUPS REPORT ON WORST RIP-OFFS

A second annual survey of State and local consumer protection agencies, released this past summer, was taken by the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators and the Consumer Federation of America.

The survey found that telemarketing offers were reported most frequently as the "worst scam," followed by mail order ripoffs and advance-fee loan scams.

The top five types of complaints the agencies received most frequently were about auto repairs, car sales, home improvement, mail order, telemarketing and credit.